

Introductory Course on Climate Rights Litigation



InforMEA
UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION PORTAL ON
MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS



Course Syllabus

Learning Objectives

Litigants assert a broad range of legal theories, some of which are premised on climate-related legal obligations and others which seek to effect greater climate action through laws and policies not specifically enacted to address climate change. This course focuses on cases arguing that insufficient action to mitigate or adapt to climate change violates plaintiffs' international or constitutional rights to a healthy environment, life, health, food, water, liberty, family life, and more. The same rights support claims that governments' failures to adapt to the impacts of climate change breach these obligations. Recent years have seen an increased number of these "climate rights" cases.

This course explores the role of litigation premised on human rights in addressing climate change. After introducing several of the most commonly cited sources of climate rights, the course addresses the reasons that people around the world look to courts as a way of tackling climate change. The course then looks in greater depth at cases filed in several key contexts. Those include cases in national courts that deal with national mitigation and adaptation commitments, cases challenging particular policies or projects, cases in international fora, and cases brought by and on behalf of persons in vulnerable situations.

Content & Duration

This online course is composed of 6 lessons which are organized in interactive modules and combine the course theory with exercises and interactions to facilitate the learning process. The core content of the lessons is complemented with numerous references to primary sources and additional resources on external websites.

It will take you approximately 2 hours to complete the full course, excluding additional materials. This is a self-paced course that allows you to manage your time as you wish. You can navigate the lessons at your convenience and retake them whenever you wish.

Completion Certificate

Take the quiz at the end of each module in the course to assess your learning progress.

You are required to answer at least 80% of the assessment questions correctly in order to obtain a course certificate.

Before obtaining the certificate you also need to submit the course survey (your feedback). This survey helps us to improve the course, develop new courses and assess if you are achieving your learning objectives.

Course Outline & Content

Lesson 1: Sources and Substance of Climate Rights

Defining climate rights and identifying the specific guarantees that those rights provide.

Lesson 2: Litigation's Role in Protecting Climate Rights

Exploring the context and background of climate rights litigation and addressing the role that these cases play in the larger context of climate governance.

Lesson 3: Challenging Ambition, Existence, and Implementation of National Mitigation and Adaptation Targets

Describing cases that seek to increase national ambition on climate change, or to see that ambitious national policies are carried out.

Lesson 4: Challenging Specific Policies or Projects

Studying cases challenging the climate impacts of specific projects or policies pursued or authorized by national governments.

Lesson 5: Cases in International Fora

Presenting significant cases in international settings and describing the role they can play in climate governance.

Lesson 6: Cases Addressing the Rights of Persons, Groups, and Peoples in Vulnerable Situations

Identifying significant cases brought by children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other groups situated differently from the public at large.